

2020 Feb/March, Bi-Monthly Board Report, Education & Outreach, Becky Laboy, E&O Specialist
March 19, 2020

In support of OCSCD's Annual Plan of Operations, which includes in its vision "to be recognized as a conservation leader", and includes in its mission "to protect, restore and sustain fully functioning soil resources...", "further natural resource stewardship through educational programs..." and "develop and nurture effective relationships... to sustain functioning ecosystem services...", the Education Department has championed 2 main initiatives to effectuate OCSCD's vision and mission: **Jersey-Friendly Yards** and **Urban and Community Agriculture**. OCSCD has subcontracted with Barnegat Bay Partnership to support the Jersey-Friendly Yards initiative, as well as other watershed-wide initiatives that serve mutual constituents and sustain the natural resources of the communities we serve. In addition, the Education Department continues to provide community programs, speak at conferences, and write grants to support OCSCD's overall mission.

GENERAL OPERATIONS (APO Item #3)

Professional Development: (APO Item #3, Activity 3)

- March 7: Native Plant Society of New Jersey Annual Spring Conference. OCSCD exhibited. Speakers included Dr. Ryan Rebozo who presented research on beach vegetation; Pat Sutton who presented on native plant gardening for the homeowner, and Jen Bulava who presented on beneficial insects. **(180 attendees)**

EDUCATION INITIATIVES – GRANT RELATED (APO Item #4)

Jersey-Friendly Yards Initiative: (APO Item #4, Activity 1)

- **2020 Jersey-Friendly Yards Conference (4th annual):** Preparations are underway for our 4th Annual Jersey-Friendly Yards Conference. Our 2020 theme is "Wild About Jersey-Friendly Yards!", with our focus on creating a yard that supports wildlife. David Mizejewski of National Wildlife Federation is confirmed as our Keynote Speaker; he will present on creating wildlife habitat in your yard, and offer a book signing: *Attracting Birds, Butterflies, and other Backyard Wildlife*.
- **JFY Certification:** OCSCD is waiting for NJDEP to green-light work on the JFY Certification project in collaboration with Barnegat Bay Partnership (BBP)
- The JFY team, including OCSCD, BBP and RCE, are in discussions with Rutgers, in an effort to build capacity and take **Jersey-Friendly Yards statewide**.

Urban and Community Agriculture Initiative: (APO Item #4, Activity 1)

- The **Community Garden Network of Ocean County (CGN)** continues efforts to connect the community to healthy food resources, to increase community food security, and improve access to healthy food.
 - CGN has created a social media presence: a Facebook page and we are developing an eNewsletter to share with constituents. OCSCD's "Sandy Soil" persona, is connected with the CGN Facebook account.
- The CGN also continues efforts and provide education and resources about urban agriculture practices, through monthly meetings, education and outreach, and project implementation.
 - January 14: Seeds 2 Supper program training offered by Jess Sinkhorn of Fulfill, to Master Gardeners and CGN members at RCE of OC. **(33 participants)** Master Gardeners will continue to receive training to present the Seeds 2 Supper Program to community members, Becky will offer her professional technical services to the Master Gardeners.
 - January 23: Planning Meeting: selected dates for 2020 programs; discussed follow-up with Ocean County Youth Services Center; revisited plan for Riverwood Park Community Garden in Toms River; Becky will be creating CGN's monthly newsletter.
 - March 19: "Community Gardening" presentation by Sue Servidio, Master Gardeners Coordinator *(cancelled by RCE due to concerns about COVID-19)*
 - July 30: Tour of Cuisine on the Green Garden
 - November 19: "4 Season Growing" presentation by Jess Sinkhorn, Garden Coordinator at Fulfill

Subcontract with Barnegat Bay Partnership: (APO Item #4, Activity 1)

The sub-award/sub-contract agreement between OCSCD and BBP, started on July 1, 2019 and runs until June 30, 2020. The subcontract Report #2 (October 1 – December 31, 2019) is attached. Becky continues to implement the following components:

- Develop, coordinate and present programs and workshops designed to educate and engage property owners in using the resources and tools on the JFY website, total of 12 per year. To date, 5 programs have been presented and reported, not including the list of programs below.
 - **February 17: Start with Healthy Soil** presented in collaboration with Sandra Blaine-Snow of Ocean County Department of Solid Waste Management - Master Composters Education Program, as part of a series of Jersey-Friendly Yards programs in partnership with BBP, Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve (JCNERR), Brick Township Municipal Utilities Authority. Series includes: “The Importance of a Healthy Watershed” (Karen Walzer), “Selecting Plants for your Jersey-Friendly Yards” (Karen Walzer and Becky Laboy), “Start with Healthy Soil” (Becky Laboy and Sandra Blaine-Snow), “Water Wisely” (Shari Kondrup). *Programs offered in tandem with Karen Walzer are financial supported by OCSCD, and programs offered by Becky Laboy, solo, are financially supported by the OCSCD/BBP sub-award. **(31 participants)**
 - **March 1: Attracting Birds to Your Jersey-Friendly Yard**, at IBSP, through Friends of Island Beach State Park. **(29 participants)**
 - **March 17: Right Plant, Right Place with Jersey-Friendly Yards**, presenting at 4 Seasons South Knolls, Jackson
 - **March 25: Jersey-Friendly Yards** at the Berkeley Library.
 - **April 25: Jersey-Friendly Yards: Landscaping for a Healthy Environment**, at LBIF – Long Beach Island Foundation for the Arts & Sciences.
 - **April 27: Combating Climate Change with a Jersey-Friendly Yard**, program for Leisure Village West.
 - **October 8: Attracting Birds with a Jersey-Friendly Yard**, presenting at GreenBriar in Toms River.
- Research and develop new content for the Plant Database, Success Stories, and other sections of the JFY website: monthly addition of new content.
 - Becky is continuing to compile a list of Jersey-Friendly plants to add to the Jersey-Friendly Plant Database on the JFY website.
 - Becky is continuing to compile URLs to other relevant websites to link to the JFY website.
- Develop and post appropriate messages on JFY social media sites, including the JFY Facebook page, 1 per week.
 - Becky continues to post information on Facebook promoting Jersey-Friendly events, programs, gardens and plants.
- Assist with developing, organizing and delivering a “train-the-trainer” program for recruitment and training of volunteers to present programs about the JFY website and its resources and tools: 2-3 training programs delivered per year.
 - Christine and Becky met with Steve Yergeau, Amy Rowe, Michele Bakacs and Mike Haberland of Rutgers, and Karen Walzer of BBP, to discuss the collaborative creation of a Jersey-Friendly Yards Train-the-Trainer program with the Rutgers Master Gardeners throughout the state.
 - Becky and Karen will present a proposal to Rutgers Agriculture and Natural Resources at their Departmental meeting on April 29 in an effort to take JFY statewide.
 - Becky and Karen are in communications with The Watershed Institute, to host and facilitate a JFY Train-the-Trainer program.
- Assist BBP with developing education and stewardship opportunities for BBP and watershed-wide volunteers, including the Barnegat Bay Volunteer Master Naturalists.
 - Becky is assisting with the development of “Ask a Barnegat Bay Scientist” program series
 - **February 25: Secrets of the Blue Crab**, by Dr. Paul Jivoff of Rider University **(36 attendees)**
 - **March 5: Sights and Sounds of the Pine Barrens** by Joel Mott of Pinelands Commission **(35 attendees)**
 - **April 28: Don’t Harass the Seagrass!** By Dr. Elizabeth Lacey of Stockton University
 - Becky is assisting BBP with preparations for the implementation of the Spring 2020 Barnegat Bay Volunteer Master Naturalist Program and the 2020 Barnegat Bay Blitz.

Seeks grants and Funding: (APO Item #4, Activity 2)

- Researching small grants to find funding to reprint LML Guides; also considering if LML Guide should undergo modifications to reflect a Jersey-Friendly Yards theme.

EDUCATION INITIATIVES (APO Item #5)

Website, Media and Promotions: (APO Item #5, Activity 1)

- Maintains and enhances the Education components of the OCSCD website; utilizes “blog” feature to post information and connect it to Facebook and Twitter
- Becky has created a “Sandy Soil” persona connected to OCSCD social media accounts (Constant Contact, Facebook, Twitter) to disseminate information about OCSCD programs. It is connected to the education@soildistrict.org email address.
- Maintains database and mailing list of **1,471 active contacts** for E&O initiatives in OCSCD’s Constant Contact database.
- Creates and sends a monthly eNewsletter.

Special Projects: (APO Item #5, Activity 2, 3, 5, 8)

- **MATES EXPO:** February 26; Becky judged scientific projects in the Botany category, Christine judged scientific projects in the Earth Science category
- **Poster Contest:** 2020 Theme: **Where would we BEE without Pollinators?** Received fewer entries this year than in previous years; we eliminated the school-wide prize of a native school garden – which may be the reason for fewer entries (?) Received 5 entries from 3 grade groups (4-12). Did not receive any entries for the 2-3 grade group. ***The District invites the OCSCD Board of Supervisors to select a Grand Champion Winner from the First Place winners from each of the 3 grade groups (4-6), (7-9), (10-12).*** The Grand Champion Winner will receive \$50 from the District. All 3 First Place winning entries will be submitted to the statewide competition. All entries will receive a ribbon and certificate.
- **23rd Annual Environmental Educators Roundtable:** will be held on **April 22** at the Lighthouse Center for Natural Resource Education. This year’s theme is “Happy Earth Day for the Next Generation – Full STEAM Ahead!” OCSCD will be celebrating Earth Day (April 22) and all workshops emphasize STEM/STEAM-based presentations and incorporate the Next Generation Science Standards. Confirmed Keynote Speaker: Kelly Gill of The Xerces Society of Invertebrate Conservation will present about the importance of pollinators and how to incorporate pollinator education in the classroom.
- **Envirothon:** Next year’s theme is: **Water Resources Management: Local Control and Local Solutions.** Freehold Soil District is hosting the Envirothon this year. Becky will coordinate the Wildlife Station. Jean will assist with the Current Events Station. The Envirothon date is Saturday, **May 2, 2020**. The location will be at Camp Topanemus, 380 Monmouth Road, Millstone, NJ 08510.

Internships/Volunteers: (APO Item #5, Activity 6)

- **Lisa Mazzuca**, one of OCSCD’s “Jersey-Friendly Gardeners”, is managing and maintaining the SHIP gardens, and will be assisting Becky with the Girl Scout “Gardener Badge”.
- **Irene Tysh**, Master Naturalist, represented OCSCD at the Community Seed Swap Day at Insectropolis in January. Irene will also exhibit at the Manchester Earth Day festival in April.
- Christine and Becky took Irene and Lisa to lunch on February 27, in appreciation of their time and efforts, as suggested by the Board.

Outreach Programs, Conferences and Events: (APO Item #5, Activity 7)

- January 26: **Community Seed Swap Day**, event at Insectropolis (approx. **125 attendees**).
- January 28: **Sands-on Science** program for Potter Creek Crusaders, Berkeley Township Elementary School (**18 participants**)
- February 10: **Selecting Plants for your Jersey-Friendly Garden** presented in collaboration with Karen Walzer of BBP, as part of a 4-program series about Jersey-Friendly Yards, in partnership with BBP, Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve (JCNERR), Ocean County Department of Solid Waste Management, and

Brick Township Municipal Utilities Authority. Series includes: “The Importance of a Healthy Watershed” (Karen Walzer), “Selecting Plants for your Jersey-Friendly Yards” (Karen Walzer and Becky Laboy), “Start with Healthy Soil” (Becky Laboy and Sandra Blaine-Snow), “Water Wisely” (Shari Kondrup). *Programs offered in tandem with Karen Walzer are financially supported by OCSCD, and programs offered by Becky Laboy, solo, are financially supported by the OCSCD/BBP sub-award. **(27 participants)**

- **March 4: Scratch the Surface, Part 1: Start with Healthy Soil**, program presented in collaboration with Dr. Steve Yergeau of Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County; one of several programs offered through RCE’s mini-series of soil programs this spring. **(16 participants)**
- **March 7: Native Plant Society of New Jersey**, exhibiting OCSCD’s Improve Your Soil Health exhibit **(180 people attended)**
- **March 14: Combating Climate Change with a Jersey-Friendly Yard** program presented at the Pinelands Short Course conference. *(cancelled by the Pinelands Commission due to concerns about COVID-19)*
- **April 7: Inspiration for Your Own Jersey-Friendly Yard** hosted by Ocean County Parks & Recreation, Cloverdale Farms County Park.
- **April 17: Manchester Earth Day Festival** Volunteer Irene Tysh will exhibit at the festival on behalf of OCSCD
- **June 15: Don’t Treat Your Soil Like Dirt** program for the Southern Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Jersey monthly meeting.

Education & Outreach Programs and Events Photos:

Community Seed Swap event, 1/26/20



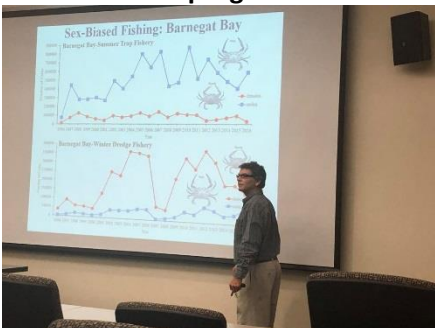
**Potter Creek Crusaders
“Sands-on Science”, 1/28/20**



Friends of Island Beach State Park, “Attracting Birds to Your Jersey-Friendly Yard”, 03/01/20



**Dr. Paul Jivoff “Secrets of the Blue Crab”
Ask-a-Scientist program series**



**Rutgers Cooperative Extension
“Start With Healthy Soil”, 03/01/20**

